



## Old Dominion Citizens Association

July 2, 2021

Community Planning, Housing and Development Staff  
Attn: Natasha Alfonso-Ahmed & Leon Vignes  
2100 Clarendon Blvd., Suite 700  
Arlington, VA 22201

Re: Old Dominion Citizens Association Comments on PLH Land Use Scenarios Analysis

Dear Natasha and Leon:

The Old Dominion Citizens Association (ODCA) submits the following comments and concerns on the Plan Lee Highway (PLH) Land Use Scenarios Analysis (LUSA) for Area 3, which includes the ODCA community. Please note that these comments and concerns were recently articulated at an ODCA-wide meeting held on June 24, 2021.

### **ODCA Comments**

While ODCA believes that it is important to have a community-based plan for future Lee Highway development vs. the current random status quo that has characterized recent development along the Lee Highway corridor, our community and neighbors have expressed significant concerns with the land scenarios that have been proposed, their variance from community consensus inputs, and the process by which they have been rolled out.

With respect to the process, until the ODCA meeting held last week, few if any of our neighbors were aware of the proposed land use scenarios for Area 3. Given the significant scale of changes being proposed the County has an obligation to do a much better job making residents aware of the proposals, reasons for deviation from previous community consensus, and giving them sufficient time to comment. That just did not happen here. As a result, there is now a significant amount of concern and misinformation about what Plan Lee Highway is even about. There needs to be significantly more outreach to our community throughout the rest of this process. This cannot be understated. ODCA residents are directly and deeply impacted by this proposal and our concerns must be listened to and addressed.

In addition, the County's Plan Lee Highway website is not at all clear about what future opportunities there will be for additional comments on the plan and much of what has been communicated verbally in presentations, such as when concerns about schools and traffic will be considered and the commitment not to use eminent domain, do not appear in the presentations

that were delivered to communities. The website needs to be updated so that the process and opportunities for comment are embedded on the home page itself without needing to piece it together by looking through the website links. It should also include easy to understand FAQs about what PLH is and is not.

As it stands, PLH LUSA for Area 3 requires significant modification for our association to be comfortable with the plan.

### **ODCA Concerns**

The proposed PLH LUSA contains several elements which the ODCA community does not and cannot support. They are listed below:

- Increased building heights of greater than four stories immediately adjacent to residential parcels along Lee Highway is not supported by ODCA.
- Increased building height and new commercial/retail space should only be added on properties directly adjacent to Lee Highway/Old Dominion and should not be expanded into residential neighborhood streets
- The addition of commercial/retail space and increased building heights over existing single-family homes along and adjacent to Columbus St., on 22<sup>nd</sup> ST N between Old Dominion and Wakefield, 23<sup>rd</sup> ST N between Columbus and Glebe, are complete non-starters within the community.
- We are concerned that the plan will lead to additional cars cutting through our neighborhood and specifically oppose adding a new street connecting N. Culpeper Street and N. Columbus.
- There is very little new green space or parks being proposed within the ODCA boundaries; the county has promised our neighborhood a community park for years and we expect the county to keep that commitment. We also recommend that the green space proposed Albermarle St between the Metro 29 Diner and the ABC store be removed to allow that entire parcel to be contiguous, but that a larger park be added at the rear of the parcel as a buffer and for community use.
- The apparent lack of a plan to address increased parking and traffic problems and the impact on Arlington Public Schools under the scenarios envisioned by the plan is a glaring omission. The ODCA community has repeatedly raised these and other concerns to Arlington County and the PLH staff, the proposed plan clearly indicates that our voices have been ignored.
- The commitment not to use eminent domain to achieve the proposed elements of any plan must be strengthened through a county board resolution. Given that the scenarios released by the county propose new building overlaid on top of people's homes, residents are understandably concerned about the risk of eminent domain. Verbal commitments are not enough.

### **Additional Comments**

In addition to the comments above, we hope you will consider the below elements in future scenarios:

- Potential re-routing of Old Dominion Drive where it intersects Lee Highway. This will improve safety at that intersection and provide more green space in the ODCA section of the corridor. However, we are concerned that the proposed T intersection could lead to additional cut-through traffic in our neighborhood through Wakefield St and request mitigation measures to reduce this risk.
- Major building heights around the intersection of Glebe Road and Lee Highway. This intersection at the heart of ODCA currently contains a critical mass of retail and residential space for the neighborhood and the emphasis on greater height is a potentially good use of this area.
- The incorporation of multi-family dwellings along the edges of Lee Highway. This makes sense provided it does not infringe on the already existing single-family homes that back up to Lee Highway.
- The inclusion of moderate to major height development along Lee Highway/Old Dominion east of Lorcom Lane/Woodstock St.

In closing, we would like to thank you and the staff for the opportunity to voice our concerns on the PLH LUSA and hope that our comments and concerns will be seriously considered as the plan is further developed. Please let us know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Mike Iger  
President  
Old Dominion Citizens Association

Richard Lolich  
Vice President  
Old Dominion Citizens Association

Barney Maloney  
Treasurer  
Old Dominion Citizens Association

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